

MONSTERS INSIDE OF ME – ANXIETY

Good morning once again. My name is Brooks and I'm one of the pastors here. If you have a Bible and I hope you do, digital or otherwise, would you flip to Matthew Chapter 6.

As a Pastor, I teach and preach a lot. I'm in front of crowds of people frequently and do a bit of public speaking...it makes sense. I get asked, and have for a while, if I ever get nervous to preach. I don't. I just don't. I don't get the butterflies in my stomach, or the sweats. I don't really know the feeling of nervousness or anxiety as it approaches. I'm not given naturally to anxiety...or at least that's what I've always said.

Now I know a lot of people that are...and I know that sometimes it's chemical things going on in the body that causes that...I understand that...not always, but for some people. But that's not me. I'm not given to that. I'm not bent that way. But that's what I THINK...and then anxiety manifests itself differently in me.

Like, before my wedding. Sadie my wife says, "You nervous at all?" I'm like "no way." No anxiety whatsoever. Then I wake up the morning of and have this gigantic blister on my lip. So all of our wedding photos are proof of my anxiety. I'm a fraud and I've been outed.

And then with every kid...I thought I had my stuff together, then got married. Wake up call. THEN had kids...(mind blown). My daughter, she's 8. Super helpful. Independent. Intelligent, driven, she's great. If you know her, you love her, she's your best friend. My oldest son, 6, compliant, quiet, caring, in his own world half the time, doing his own thing. Compassionate and thoughtful. Then there's Branch, our 2 year old (turns 2 this week). He's...different. Just a brute. All boy...naw, all animal. And then 13 days ago, we had Haddon and y'all, I'm just praying, "LORD, PLEASE don't let him be like Branch. It's too much Lord, it'll do me in." And that's when I realized...maybe I AM given to anxiety. More kids...more anxiety.

But what if I told you that there's an end to anxiety? And I mean spiritually. Hopefully you are going to the breakout session w/ Reid Wood. He's going to

cover the counseling side of things. Come at it from a different angle. But spiritually, there is a way to END your anxiety. Let's look at what Jesus said.

Matthew 6

- Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is teaching a multitude of people, most of which haven't believed in Him as God/Messiah/Christ. But there's some, namely the disciples, who have been called out from unbelief into worship and followership. They are standing amongst this crowd listening to Jesus teach. And what Jesus teaches in these 3 chapters is the contrasting tension between what is normal in unbelief and how the believer's life looks radically different. And as we read his words today, I want you to go into it knowing that the Christian's approach to handling anxiety is different than the Non-Christians, because of Jesus.

Read 6:24-34

As you are studying Scripture, and man I hope that you do, we always want to note the main points of passages. And Jesus makes it easy for us here. 5 times he repeats 1 phrase.

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS

- Vs. 25, "Therefore I tell you do not be anxious"
- Vs 27, "and which of you, by being anxious, can add a single..."
- Vs 28, "And why are you anxious about clothing?"
- Vs 31, "Therefore do not be anxious."
- Vs 34, "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow."

Over and over again in rapid succession Jesus hammers into the ears of his followers and the crowd a COMMAND to be free from anxiety.

- Now this is interesting because anxiety is a feeling. It isn't a choice. No one wakes up one morning and decides, I think today I'm going to wig out over everything I've got going on. Or even the opposite..."today...Hakuna Matata Baby!"
- There's nothing inside of us that determines if we are anxious or not. Because anxiety is a feeling, it is externally influenced. And yet we have a command, Do not be anxious!
- Look at the external influences here and the arguments that Jesus makes.

- Vs 24 – There’s a war within us that is spiritual. It’s a war of worship. On one side you have worship of God, and on the other side you have worship of money/mammon/possessions. And these are diametrically opposed to one another.
 - It has been this way from the beginning of the Law. Moses receives the 10 Commandments on Sinai and the first two say, “Worship only God and no idols.” What Jesus is saying here is that anxiety comes first when we reject the worship of the LORD and replace it with the worship of an idol...in this case money, but in all cases, it is some kind of possession. It is the replacement of the creator with the created.
 - So that’s the first argument Jesus gives. The rest stem from it.
- Vs 25 – Don’t worry about what to eat/drink/wear...these things that money buy. Don’t worry about them. Don’t be anxious about them. Why?
 - Examine the birds. They store nothing and God gives them what they need each day.
 - Look at the flowers. They don’t work and God clothes them in splendor.
 - You are more valuable than birds to God. You are more valuable than flowers that come and go...because you don’t come and go. Humans are eternal. We are given souls, and will live forever in heaven or in hell, depending on how we respond to the free gift of salvation offered in Jesus. This is why we are more valuable. God takes great care of the temporary, so this should settle in your heart that he takes care of the eternal. Another argument from Jesus.
- Vs 27 – It adds no time to your life, so it is of no use.
- Vs 31 – The gentiles/pagans are the anxious. Don’t be like them.
- Vs 34 – Worried about tomorrow?
 - There are things that will come tomorrow that you don’t even know about today, so how can worrying about the future do anything but rob you of today? So don’t!

Brooks, this all sounds well and good, but I know I shouldn't be anxious, doesn't mean I'm not. And THAT is where God has confronted ME, so I'm glad you brought it up.

Because remember that anxiety is a feeling, not a choice, so if Jesus, who obviously knows this, is giving us arguments for eliminating anxiety then Jesus assumes that **HIS WORD AFFECTS OUR EMOTIONS**. I began to ask myself if that is true for me in my life. Is the Word of God commanding me to not be anxious enough for me to not be anxious? Is Christ enough for me? Is His Word sufficient?

- If I don't believe that it is, then doesn't that mean there's a problem with His word? **ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!!** It shows me there's a problem with me!
- What's the problem? Jesus addresses it...look at what He says in vs. 30, "Oh you of little faith."
- What Jesus is saying here is that Brooks, if these arguments that I have just given have no effect on you, it's because you have no faith in what I say. Church, if these arguments are not enough for you, it's because you have no faith in what Jesus says. You don't believe that what He says is true, and therefore it's a problem of worship. Either He's sovereign and enough, or He is not...which do you believe?

So let me tell you where that leaves us...it leaves us saying, "ok, then what? What do I do?" And Jesus gives us the answer...again.

Vs 33 – SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD. SEEK CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Here's what He is saying.

Are you anxious? Don't be. Instead, **DRAW NEAR TO CHRIST, LEAN INTO CHRIST, SEEK HIM AND WHAT HE IS ABOUT**. Give up your idols.

As you draw into Christ, anxiety will dissipate because you will find 3 Great Truths:

- 1) God is GREAT!
 - a. He's sovereign. He's in control. He oversees it all. Nothing catches Him off guard. Nothing shifts Him to plan B. It's **PLAN A, always**. The Problem of Sin and it's solution in crushing His Son Jesus for it = plan A. Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing thwarts God's plan. He is not an impotent God. He is great. He is strong. There is none like Him. It is His Kingdom. He's the King.

b. And that should bring you and me great comfort.

2) God is GOOD!

a. Everything that God does is right and good. EVERYTHING. Everything that happens to you, around you, is guaranteed for your good ultimately.

b. Romans 8:28

c. That's a hard truth to swallow sometimes, but it is TRUE nonetheless.

i. If Heaven is the ultimate Home, then our death is just a welcome parade into perfect paradise.

3) God is WITH US!

a. This is the truth that separates everything for the Christian. For the Christian, the Holy Spirit of God dwells within us.

b. Remember when I said the problem is externally influenced. The Solution is also external. It is outside of ourselves, you can't muster it up, BUT it resides INSIDE of ourselves...or more specifically HE resides inside of us. He is the answer. It is the Holy Spirit invading us at our conversion and then the Holy Spirit seeking the glory of the Son of God and the Father of God for the Kingdom of God. And it happens BY HIM through us.

i. Seek first the Kingdom. And it's the end of anxiety as we know it.

I'm not just making this up...we saw Jesus' command. But we also ALWAYS want Scripture to interpret Scripture. It gives us the full picture when we have that happen. So here's some texts as proof for us.

1) **ISAIAH 41:10** – “Fear not, *for I am with you*, be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you (*GOD IS GREAT*), I will Help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand (*God is Good*).”

a. All three truths present in that verse. He's great and strengthens us.

He's good and His hand on us is right. He is with us, so fear not, dismay not. No reason or room for anxiety here.

2) **Philippians 4:5c-8** – “The LORD is at hand: do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever

is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

- a. See friends, the answer is here, prophesied by Isaiah, commanded by Jesus, reiterated by Paul. When we feel anxious in our spirit, it is not what God intended, so we must draw near to God, listen to His words, feel their effect, and find that they are true because He alone is Great, He is good, and His is with us.

And I hope that ministers to you today as it does to me. Let me pray for us.